

BRAZIL

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BRAZIL - HIGHWAY TRANSPORTATION

A. POLICIES

1. The basic Brazilian policy covering highways has, as its long range objective, the construction of a Federal network of main highways connecting the existing local state systems. This has been the expressed aim of several successive Brazilian governments. President Vargas announced in 1944 that it was a responsibility of the Ministry for Transportation and Public Works to "... organize a general plan of transportation development and road building for the entire country in order to develop it gradually and in accordance with public necessity; and not in pursuance of occasional private interests."

Under the "new state", highway building policy is determined by the Federal government. Formerly road construction was left to the initiative of the States, with the result that there are few through highways connecting the local networks spreading out from the port cities of Recife, Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Porto Alegre and Rio Grande du Sul.

Brazil has adopted a hands-off policy with respect to controls over highway motor transportation. The government apparently believes that a badly needed expansion of motor transport is most likely to occur with a minimum of interference. The only control of motor freight operations consists of a statistical cargo check when motor freight passes from one state to another. Passenger transport on the highways is subject only to government approval of rates.

2. While highways, railroads and inland waterways are the responsibility of the Ministry of Transportation and Public Works, it appears that the respective departments of the Ministry function almost autonomously, and there is little integration of policy within the Ministry on the various media of transportation.
3. Highway policy has been influenced by strategic and military considerations to a limited degree. During World War II the absence of an efficient coastal highway was a substantial weakness in view of Brazilian and Allied shipping losses, which reduced the volume of vital port-to-port coastal shipping traffic. The national highway plan (see A-4) now takes into consideration a possible rupture of coastal shipping under war conditions. The Ministry of War has constructed some purely military roads. The road from Sao Joao in Santa Catarina to Barracao on the Argentine frontier, for example, was constructed by military engineers.
4. Subventions have been granted for many years to encourage local

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road construction. The Federal Government will now directly control the major highway developments in Brazil under a National Highway Plan, which was drawn up by a Special Committee appointed by the Minister of Transportation and Public Works. The final report was completed in 1943, and its conclusions became law in 1944, (Plano Rodoviario Nacional).

The proposed national highways are classified into three groups: (1) north-south, or longitudinal highways (2) east-west, or transversal highways, and (3) connecting highways. The term "national highway" is defined as a main road which assumes national importance by:

- a. connecting two or more States;
- b. reaching or approaching within 150 kms. of the country's borders;
- c. giving access to maritime river or lake ports operated under Federal concession;
- d. forming part of the Pan-American system;
- e. being of military, administrative or tourist interest; or
- f. being an indispensable link between trunk highways.

The National Highway Plan includes the following projected highways:

Getulio Vargas - coastal route Belem to Jaguarao  
Pan-Mordestina - Sao Luiz to Salvador  
Transnordestina - Fortaleza to Salvador  
Transbrasiliana - Belem to Santa Ana do Livramento  
Amazonica - Santarem to Porto Don Carlos  
Acreana - Cruzeiro do Sul to Guaiaba

The entire plan includes approximately 20,000 kms. of north-south and 14,000 kms. of transversal highways plus about 3000 kms. of connecting branch roads. While the plan is ambitious, it is capable of fulfillment within 8 to 10 years.

The National Highway Fund, made up of receipts from Federal taxes on fuel and oil, and from motor vehicle import duties, will help to finance the National Highway Plan. The fund is distributed as follows:

- 40% to the National Highway Department;
- 60% to the States, which receive aid on the basis of:
  - 36% to States in proportion to local taxes collected;
  - 12% to States in proportion to population; and
  - 12% to States in proportion to area.

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5. Highway policy is influenced by economic, political and geographic considerations in that order of importance. The projected highways will open up large areas of Brazil for an expansion of internal trade, and will lessen the country's dependence on coastwise shipping. The young Brazilian writer, De Sa, expressed a widespread view on highways in asserting: "the country has skipped the railroad era..... further funds.....should go into the construction of highways."

**B. ORGANIZATION**

1. The Ministry of Transport and Public Works controls all forms of transportation except civil air. Within the Ministry, the National Highway Department handles all matters concerned with highways. The War Department, however, jointly controls certain highways with the Ministry of Transport and Public Works. The National Highway Department supervises road construction in southern and central Brazil, while the Federal Irrigation or Reclamation Service (Inspeccoria Federal de Obras Contra as Secas) constructs highways in northeastern Brazil for the Ministry of Transport and Public Works. The War Department, moreover, has used its highway battalions to build certain highways, particularly those extending the networks of southern Brazil towards the borders of Paraguay and Bolivia. It appears that these roads, of first-stage construction, are considered to have military significance.
2. The National Highway Department controls technical and administrative services pertaining to studies, projects, specifications, budget, traffic policies, finance, and, through delegation of authority, road building activities carried out by the States, War Department, and the Reclamation Service. The National Highway Department has the following Divisions:

I. Deliberative Divisions

- a. Highway Council
- b. Executive Council

II. Fiscal Division

- a. Financial Controls

III. Executive Divisions

- a. Director General
- b. Technical Services
- c. Judicial
- d. Administration

It is the function of the National Highway Department to administer the National Highway Fund. (Sec A-4). Each state in the United States of Brazil has its own State Highway Depart-

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ment. The more progressive states along the coast, especially in the vicinity of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo have constructed outstanding examples of modern highways under the general supervision of the National Highway Department.

3. There does not appear to be much organized coordination of the various forms of transportation within the Ministry of Transportation and Public Works. Coordination achieved during the war with other departments is rapidly disappearing. There is no formal relationship with the civil aviation agencies in the Air Ministry.
4. The construction of modern highways began in Brazil about twenty years ago. Various states had organized highway departments before the establishment of the Federal Roads Commission in 1927. In 1930 the Commission was abolished by the Vargas regime and in 1937 the National Highway Department was created under the Ministry of Transportation and Public Works. Decree-law Number 8,463, dated December 27, 1945, gave the National Highway Department a more autonomous position within the Ministry. The same decree created the National Highway Fund and directed its administration by the National Highway Department.
5. All agencies concerned with highway transportation are attempting to administer policy efficiently and in accordance with the public interest. They are handicapped, however, by local state politics, military considerations and financial problems.

C. ADMINISTRATION

1. The National Highway Department determines the priority of new Federal highways in accordance with the National Highway Plan (Decree No. 15193, March 20, 1944). In contrast to the US system of highway development, where state construction stems from local roads and Federal construction from State systems, Brazil works from the top down, the Federal Government holding that it should initiate highway construction throughout the country.

The expanding motor transport passenger lines in Brazil operate under concessions granted by the National Highway Department, after requirements regarding their financial reliability and the type of their equipment are met. The implementation of these controls by the National Highway Department, however, appears not to have reached all state and local levels. The State of Pernambuco, for example, is reported to have deviated from Federal controls by permitting all vehicles to transport passengers. Motor transportation is encouraged in this state by very elastic local regulations. Trucking operations are not regulated in Brazil.

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2. The National Highway Department established passenger rate schedules on a passenger-kilometer basis, varying with the kind of road surface over which the vehicles pass, and the type of vehicle operated. There are no officially established motor freight rates in Brazil.
3. There is practically unrestricted competition in highway transportation, passenger and freight, throughout Brazil. Highway passenger transport has become increasingly competitive to the railroads. In spite of varying highway conditions, bus time between the cities of Sao Paulo and Curitiba, for example, is 12 hours for a distance of 523 kms., against a train time of 26 to 30 hours. This difference reflects the disjointed nature of Brazilian rail development.
4. The Brazilian National Transit Code, 1941, governs highway safety and accident investigations. It also contains voluminous regulations regarding the qualifications of automotive vehicle operators. The thoroughness of the regulations is illustrated by the provision that professional drivers must pass physical examinations, aptitude and technical tests, must undergo sanity and character investigations, pass examinations on traffic laws, and meet requirements regarding military service and nationality.
5. The initiative for the training of engineers and technicians in highway work rests with the educational institutions. The respective professional organizations license civil engineers. Laws relating to highway planning and construction often stipulate that only licensed civil engineers may hold certain positions contained in departmental and State tables of organization.
6. The lack of international highways connecting Brazil and her neighbors obviates the necessity for international agreements concerning motor transport.
7. National Highway Department inspectors, working from inspection posts on the Federal highways, prepare traffic and accident reports. Statistics on cargo crossing State lines are furnished to the Ministry of Agriculture. Data compiled on the number of passengers and cargo moved, however, is only partially and belatedly published. Individual accident reports state whether fatalities have occurred, and give the degree of vehicle damage and nature of personal injuries.

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